



GREEN JAY

PASSERIFORMES

Family: Corvidae

Genus: *Cyanocorax*

Species: *yncas*



Range: Southern Texas, west-central Mexico south to the highlands of Guatemala and northern Honduras; subtropical regions of Colombia and northern Venezuela south to eastern Ecuador, Peru, and northern Bolivia.

Habitat: Tropical deciduous forests, grasslands and montane forests; in Texas open woodland and brushy mesquite thickets.

Niche: omnivorous, arboreal, diurnal

Wild diet: insects, worms, acorns, seeds, and fruit

Zoo diet:

Life Span: (Wild) 11.5 years
(Captivity)

Sexual dimorphism: none

Location in SF Zoo: South American Tropical Rainforest and Aviary

APPEARANCE & PHYSICAL ADAPTATIONS:

A Green Jay is in the crow family with a strong bill and sturdy legs. They are a colorful tropic, long-tailed bird with short rounded wings. Coloring includes a bright green body and green tail with yellow on the sides; brilliant blue crown and cheeks; the rest of its head, throat, and breast are black. It has large nasal bristles that form a distinct tuft in some subspecies, but are less developed in others.

Weight: 2.3-3.9 oz

Body Length: 10 – 11.5 in

Wingspan:

STATUS & CONSERVATION

The Green Jay holds no special status, but populations are limited by the amount of breeding habitat available. It is listed as least concerned on IUCN Redlist. There range is expanding in Texas.

COMMUNICATION AND OTHER BEHAVIOR

The green jay has a variety of calls, and flocks are often noisy and conspicuous in the breeding season. The bird's most common call makes a *rassh-rassh-rassh* sound, but many other unusual notes also occur. One of the most distinctive calls sounds like an alarm bell.

Meat and human scraps add to the diet when opportunity arises. Green jays have been observed using sticks as tools to extract insects from tree bark. Main green jays hop along branches in the forests. They will rarely consume food immediately but will carry it in their bill to a perch where they then hold it in their feet and peck it apart before swallowing in smaller bits.

COURTSHIP AND YOUNG

Breeding is from late March to mid-July among monogamous pairs. The male and the female Green Jay build a well-concealed nest in a tree or in a thorny bush or thicket. The bulky cup-shaped nest is constructed of thorny twigs and small stems and may be lined with bits of moss, dry grass, and leaves. Only the female incubates, but both parents take care of the altricial young. After the chicks have hatched, the male continues to bring food to the nest for five days, then both parents share equally in bringing food to the chicks. They will continue to feed the chicks three weeks after leaving the nest.

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| Incubation: 17 days | Sexual Maturity: southern pop. - more than 2 years |
| # of Young: 3 - 5 | Fledging: 19 – 22 days |

MISCELLANEOUS

There are two distinct populations of the Green Jay. The first is found north of the Rio Grande river in southern Texas to north central Honduras. The second population stretches from Colombia and Venezuela south through eastern Ecuador and Peru to Bolivia. They are separated by 1,500 km (900 mi). The two different groups differ in color, calls, and habitat use, and may be different species. The South American Green Jays are larger and have a crest in front of their eyes. The northern group is solitary breeders and will resume large flocks after breeding whereas the southern range is territorial in groups 3-9 which they maintain throughout the year. The southern range birds use members of the flock to help a breeding pair with nest construction and will even feeding the young birds.

Sources:

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The Handbook of the Birds of the World Vol XIV © 1996, Lynx Edicions, p.585

http://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Green_Jay/id

http://animaldiversity.ummz.umich.edu/accounts/Cyanocorax_yncas/

<http://txtbba.tamu.edu/species-accounts/green-jay/>